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BARBADOS

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1. LAND AND PEOPLE

1. Barbados (area: 430 sq. km.) is the most easterly of the Caribbean islands, located at 13° 10' north and 59° 35' west. The island lies 435 kilometres north-east of Venezuela. Barbados is 34 kilometres long by 23 kilometres wide, and is of mainly coral formation, except for the eastern district called the Scotland District. Barbados is relatively flat, rising from the west coast in a series of terraces to a ridge in the centre. The highest point is Mount Hillaby, 340 metres above sea level.

2. Barbados has a tropical climate. Temperatures seldom fall below 20° Centigrade or rise above 31° Centigrade. Annual rainfall averages 1,254 mm at sea level to 1,650 mm at the highest point.

3. The largest ethnic group in Barbados is Afro-Caribbean, descendants of the slaves brought across from the west coast of Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A small but important minority of persons are Euro-Caribbean, descendants of the indentured servants, planters and other European migrants to Barbados since its colonization by the British in the seventeenth century. Other population groupings are smaller and generally newer to Barbados.

4. The principle sources of information for the following data were: the results of the 1990 Census, the 1994 Barbados Economic Report of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, and the 1993-2000 Government of Barbados Development Plan. All the demographic calculations are based not on the estimated total resident population (which stands at 260,491), but on the tabulable population, which stands at 247,288.

Population	Total	Male	Female
Estimated resident population	260 491	124 571	135 920
Tabulable population	247 288	118 556	128 732
Institutional population (included above)	2 453	1 361	1 092
Estimated undercount	13 203	6 015	7 188
Percentage	5		

5. The ethnic and demographic characteristics of the population are given below:

Ethnic group	Afro-Caribbean	Euro-Caribbean	East Indian	Chinese	Middle Eastern	Mixed	Other	Not stated	Total
Pop. size	228 683	8 022	1 879	105	105	5 886	200	2 408	247 288

6. The following table shows per capita gross domestic product (Barbados dollar = 50 United States cents):

Year	Per capita GDP at factor cost ($'000)
1985	8.6
1986	9.1
1987	9.8
1988	10.4
1989	11.3
1990	11.5
1991	11.2
1992	10.3
1993	10.6
1994	11.1

7. The nominal GDP for 1994 was $2,942 million, the GDP at market prices was $3,477 million.

8. The rate of inflation for 1991-1994 is given below:

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994
Inflation rate (%)	6.1	6.0	1.1	0.1

9. The external debt is shown in the following table:

Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Foreign debt in $ Bds. millions	444.0	553.5	706.9	789.7	767.1	836	778.7	683.6	704.6	710.2
Foreign debt as % of GDP	20.4	24.1	28.3	29.6	26.3	28.2	-	-	25.2	24.3

10. Unemployment in 1994 was 21.2 per cent of the total adult population (17.1 per cent among males and 25.8 per cent among females).

11. The literacy rate (1985) was 98 per cent.

12. The following table shows the religious affiliations of the population:

Church	Anglican	Baptist	Bretheren	Church of God	Hindu	Jehovah's Witness	Methodist	Moravian
No. of members	81 500	4 415	2 219	5 432	603	4 385	14 637	3 553

Church	Muslim	Pente-costal	Rasta-farian	Roman Catholic	Seventh Day Adventist	Salvation Army	Other	None	Not stated
No. of members	1 047	31 376	1 126	10 797	11 314	987	17 596	49 829	6 652

13. English is the mother tongue.

14. The life expectancy is 72.9 years for males and 77.4 years for females.

15. Infant mortality is shown below:

Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Infant deaths per 1,000 births	17.8	19.0	22.0	19.5	18.2	15.5	15.3	13.8	10.1	8.5

16. The population under 15 and over 65 is shown in the following table:

Age	No. of persons			% population		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
All ages	247 288	118 556	128 732	100	47.94	52.05
Under 5 years	18 625	9 412	9 213	7.53	3.8	3.72
5 to 9 years	20 350	10 229	10 121	8.22	4.13	4.09
10 to 14 years	20 612	10 481	10 131	8.33	4.22	4.09
65 to 69 years	8 107	3 522	4 585	3.27	1.42	1.85
70 to 74 years	7 842	3 329	4 513	3.17	1.34	1.82
75 to 79 years	6 128	2 527	3 601	2.47	1.02	1.45
80 to 84 years	4 136	1 578	2 558	1.67	0.63	1.04
85 years and over	3 050	951	2 099	1.23	0.38	0.84
Total: persons under 15 and over 65	88 850	42 029	46 821	35.89	16.94	18.9

17. Forty per cent of the population lives in urban areas. The population of the capital, Bridgetown, is 6,270 (102,700 in the Greater Bridgetown area).

18. The following table shows the percentage of households headed by women:

Total No. of households	Total No. of households headed by men	Total No. of households headed by women	Percentage of total households headed by men	Percentage of total households headed by women
75 170	42 496	32 674	56.53	43.47

19. The following table shows the total population and dwelling units by parish:

Parish	Population			Dwelling units		
	Total	Male	Female	All units	Occupied	Vacant
Barbados	247 288	118 556	128 732	82 204	75 211	6 993
St. Michael (including Bridgetown)	89 840	428 926	46 948	29 928	27 712	2 216
Bridgetown	5 928	2 861	3 067	2 021	1 942	79
St. Michael (excluding Bridgetown)	83 912	40 031	43 881	27 907	25 770	2 137
Christ Church	46 943	22 065	24 878	16 702	15 063	1 639
St. George	16 718	8 140	8 578	4 934	4 702	232
St. Philip	20 540	10 052	10 488	6 664	6 039	625
St. John	9 640	4 754	4 886	2 878	2 662	216
St. James	20 771	9 798	10 973	7 676	6 688	988
St. Thomas	10 676	5 124	5 552	3 256	3 077	179
St. Joseph	7 204	3 581	3 623	2 244	2 030	214
St. Andrew	5 624	2 792	2 832	1 622	1 519	103
St. Peter	10 055	4 874	5 181	3 289	2 970	319
St. Lucy	9 277	4 484	4 793	3 011	2 749	262

20. Bridgetown is situated in the parish of St. Michael. The parishes of St. Michael, Christ Church and St. James can generally be considered the most urban areas of the country, although they also contain significant agricultural lands. Generally, rural parishes such as St. George, St. Philip and St. Thomas have been experiencing recent residential-type developments, in part as a result of the improved road network, including a major south-to-west highway.

II. GENERAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

A. Political history and framework

21. The Colony of Barbados was founded by the British in 1627 and remained British, without changing hands, until independence in 1966.

22. Archaeological evidence indicates that prior to 1627 the island had been inhabited by Arawak and Carib Amerindians. Early British settlers first grew tobacco and cotton, but found this unprofitable, and switched to sugar cane as

early as 1637. The switch from tobacco and cotton to sugar is one of the most important events in Barbadian history. Labour- and capital-intensive, the cultivation of sugar caused the consolidation of small farms into larger plantations, then the large-scale importation from Africa of slave labour.

23. The next major change in Barbados' history was the emancipation of the slaves in 1838. The nineteenth century was marked by instability in the dominant sugar industry, first challenged by the end of slavery, then by the equalization of sugar duties for British and foreign sugars imported into Britain in 1852, competition from beet sugar producers, and the fall in sugar prices. For the majority Afro-Barbadian population, working conditions, even after emancipation, continued to be harsh. Unlike larger West Indian colonies where land was available for small farming by individuals, Barbados was small and densely populated and available arable land expensive and scarce. A large proportion of the working population was forced to continue working on the plantations at very low wages. By 1896, widespread economic distress and social unrest prompted investigations by a Royal Commission. The seminal riots of 1937 prompted another commission of inquiry from Britain which, amongst other things, recommended the legalization of trade unions. By 1950, with the growing momentum of decolonization, universal adult suffrage was introduced. Ministerial government followed in 1954. By this time the political class had become increasingly representative of Barbados' demographic distribution. Encouraged by Britain, the colonies of the British West Indies formed a Federation in 1958. The failure of the Federation in 1962 precipitated the movement towards individual independence for the colonies, which Barbados attained in 1966.

24. The years since independence have been marked by a steady increase in standards of living, a succession of exemplary elections and changes of government, universal, free and compulsory primary and secondary education and free tertiary education, and a diversification of revenue sources to include tourism, light manufacturing and informatics.

25. Barbados has a long tradition of parliamentary procedure, dating back to 1639 when the first Parliament was established. Until 1950, when universal adult suffrage was introduced, franchise was based on gender (only men) and wealth (a certain yearly income level or property). The organized political awakening of the majority Afro-Barbadian community can be traced to the inter-war years, when one of the first popular political parties, the Democratic League, was established. The seminal social unrest of 1937 precipitated the creation of trade unions and the first modern-type political party, the Barbados Labour Party, which is still extant today and which won the elections of 1994. The Democratic Labour Party was formed in the 1950s as an offshoot of the BLP, and in 1989, the National Democratic Party was formed as an offshoot of the Democratic Labour Party. Since independence, the major political parties have had alternating stints in office:

1966-1976 two Democratic Labour Party terms
1976-1986 two Barbados Labour Party terms
1986-1994 two Democratic Labour Party terms
1994- Barbados Labour Party.

B. Principal organs of the Constitution

1. The Executive

26. Section 35 of the Constitution states: "There shall be a Parliament of Barbados which shall consist of Her Majesty, a Senate, and a House of Assembly." Section 63 (1) of the Constitution states: "The Executive Authority of Barbados is vested in Her Majesty."

27. The Queen is the head of State of Barbados. The Queen of England is also the Queen of Barbados. The Queen is represented in Barbados by the Governor-General whom she names (on the advice of the Prime Minister). The Queen does not take part, however, in the Government of the country.

The Prime Minister

28. At the end of the General Election, the Governor-General sends for the person whom she considers best able to command a majority of the members of the House of Assembly. In practice this is usually the leader of the party which has won the highest number of seats. Section 66 (2) of the Constitution gives great power to the Prime Minister, and protects him from dissatisfied party supporters who may consider revolting and having his appointment revoked. If a majority of Parliament supports a no-confidence motion in the Prime Minister, he may, within three days of the passing of the resolution, either resign or ask the Governor-General to dissolve Parliament, thereby precipitating a General Election.

Ministers

29. The Constitution provides for a minimum of five ministers who are selected from either the House of Assembly or the Senate.

30. Section 72 of the Constitution makes provision for the appointment of an Attorney-General. Although the Constitution does not require the Attorney-General to have any particular qualifications, an attorney at law is invariably appointed. He is the principal legal adviser to the Government.

31. The Cabinet is the body having overall responsibility for the management of the Government. Section 64 (2) of the Constitution states: "The Cabinet shall be the principal instrument of policy and shall be charged with the general direction and control of the Government of Barbados and shall be collectively responsible therefor to Parliament."

The Governor-General

32. Section 28 of the Constitution provides that: "There shall be a Governor-General of Barbados who shall be appointed by Her Majesty and shall hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure and who shall be her Majesty's representative in Barbados."

33. The majority of the Governor-General's functions are ceremonial such as conferring honours and receiving ambassadors. The real power of Government is in the hands of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. As a rule, the

Governor-General exercises her function on the advice of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and, in some specified cases, the Leader of the Opposition. The Constitution provides specifically that the Governor-General must act on the advice of the Prime Minister in, inter alia, the following cases:

(a) Appointing and removing ministers of Government;

(b) Appointing of 12 members of the Senate;

(c) Dissolving Parliament;

(d) Appointing the Chief Justice and High Court judges.

2. The Legislature

34. Barbados has a bicameral legislature: the House of Assembly, composed of 28 members elected by universal adult suffrage who represent the 28 constituencies into which the island is divided for electoral purposes. The Senate consists of 21 members made up as follows:

(a) Twelve members appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister;

(b) Two members appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition;

(c) Seven members appointed by the Governor-General at her discretion to represent religious, social, economic or such other interests as the Governor-General may consider ought to be represented.

35. The Constitution recognizes the office of the Leader of the Opposition and confers certain power upon him. If the Leader of the Opposition loses the support of the majority of parliamentarians who oppose the Government, he loses his function as Leader. In 1989, four members of the governing party broke away and formed their own party. The incumbent Leader of the Opposition commanded only three parliamentarians and was thus replaced.

36. Section 48 (1) of the Constitution states: "Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament may make laws for the peace, order and good government of Barbados." Normally, for a bill to become law, it must be passed by the House of Assembly and the Senate and receive the approval of the Governor-General. While the Constitution gives the Governor-General the power to refuse approval, it is a convention that she would not normally refuse to approve a bill which has been passed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

3. The Judiciary

37. The Constitution makes provision for the Superior Court. Section 80 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the Supreme Court consisting of a High Court and a Court of Appeal. The judges are appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. Once a judge has been

appointed, he is not under the control of any person. Apart from leaving office as a result of reaching the age of retirement, it is difficult to remove a judge from office. A tribunal must be called by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister which must judge that he has committed an offence.

38. The courts have the power to review any law passed by Parliament to ensure that it conforms to the provisions of the Constitution.

39. In 1981, Parliament passed the Supreme Court Judicature Act which makes provision for a separate Court of Appeal comprising the Chief Justice as President and two other judges. Section 86 of the Constitution makes it possible for Barbados to share a Court of Appeal with any other Commonwealth country. At present, there exist three avenues of appeal outside of Barbados:

(a) To the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (a committee of the British House of Lords);

(b) To the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Barbados being a signatory to the American Convention on Human Rights);

(c) To the United Nations Human Rights Committee (Barbados being a signatory to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol allowing for the appeal of individuals to the Committee).

4. Other organs of Government

40. The Constitution makes provision for the establishment and composition of the Public Service Commission which deals with the appointment, promotion and discipline of public servants. Similar commissions exist which deal with the police and the Judiciary.

41. The Constitution makes provision for a Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) who is a public officer responsible for controlling criminal prosecutions. Acting on his own discretion he decides whether or not action should be taken against a person or whether such action, if commenced, should be discontinued. The DPP is appointed by the Governor-General acting on the recommendation of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Because of the importance of his position, the post is protected in the same manner as that of judges and, like them, his salary cannot be reduced while he holds office. The DPP can only be removed from office by a tribunal appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

42. The Constitution makes provision for an Auditor General who is responsible for auditing the accounts of all government departments at least once a year. Like the DPP, the Auditor General can only be removed by a specially appointed tribunal.

III. REMEDIAL AUTHORITY WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

A. The courts

43. In Barbados there is no separate constitutional court dealing exclusively with alleged breaches of constitutionally protected human rights. If someone considers his human rights to have been violated, whether by Government, an individual or an organization, he can seek redress before the courts.

B. The Constitution

44. Barbados' Constitution contains a bill of rights loosely following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights model, in which a number of basic freedoms are guaranteed: the right to life; the right to personal liberty; protection from slavery and forced labour; protection from inhuman treatment; protection from deprivation of property; protection against arbitrary search or entry; right to freedom of conscience; right to freedom of expression; right to freedom of assembly and association; right to freedom of movement; protection from discrimination on grounds of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed; right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence.

45. The Constitution states that any person alleging the violation of the above rights may apply to the High Court for redress, thus making the High Court the effective domestic guardian of human rights in Barbados.

C. The Privy Council

46. Barbados' Supreme Court is the highest court in Barbados, but not the highest Barbadian court. Appellants can appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the (British) House of Lords, which is in effect the court of final recourse for Barbados, and most countries of the Commonwealth.

D. International human rights instruments

47. Barbados is a signatory to all the major international human rights instruments, including:

(a) Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1972);

(b) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1972);

(c) Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1972);

(d) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and its Optional Protocol) (1973);

(e) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1973);

(f) Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1973);

(g) Slavery Convention of 1926 as amended (1976);

(h) International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1979);

(i) Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1979);

(j) Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1979);

(k) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1980);

(l) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1980);

(m) American Convention on Human Rights (1982);

(n) International Convention against Apartheid in Sports (1986);

(o) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).

E. The Ombudsman

48. The Ombudsman Act (1981) establishes the office of Ombudsman, whose function, as defined by the Act, is to "investigate and report upon allegations of improper, unreasonable or inadequate administrative conduct". Like the Auditor General and the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Ombudsman cannot easily be removed from his post. A tribunal must be called by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Ombudsman cannot be a member of either House of Parliament nor can he engage in any other occupation. Any complaints made to the Ombudsman must be made in writing and cannot be anonymous. Normally, he cannot investigate a case where the complainant has other legal means of redress. With some exceptions, the Ombudsman has the power to request any minister or officer of a government department or any other person to supply information which he considers necessary.

F. Non-governmental organizations

49. There exists in Barbados a thriving non-governmental organization fraternity whose concerns tend to be specialized and which play an important role in both the stimulation of debate on human rights issues and active lobbying in favour of the people they represent and the rights relevant to them. Thus, there exist organizations such as: The Barbados Council for the Disabled; PAREDOS (Parent Education for Development in Barbados); The Women's Forum; The National Organisation of Women; The Barbados Environmental Association; The Barbados National Trust; The Barbados Family Planning Association; The Barbados Association for Mentally Retarded Children; The Barbados Association for the Blind and the Deaf; The Barbados Bar Association; The Barbados Red Cross Society; The Caribbean Policy Development Centre.

G. The Bureau of Women's Affairs

50. The Bureau is responsible for policy elaboration and research in the area of women's rights and is responsible to the Minister for Community Development. Women have always played an important role in the socio-economic fabric of Barbados: as heads of households, in education, health care, the civil service and small businesses. Increasingly, women are occupying all levels of managerial positions within both the private and public sectors. The liberal professions and elected public offices too are increasingly occupied by women.

IV. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

51. The values and traditions of Barbados have for many years been steeped in the recognition of fundamental human rights such as the rights to freedom of expression, association and conscience. Awareness of human rights issues forms part of a strong, nationwide ethos of discussion and debate on all matters of concern to citizens. Various government departments whose work is connected with human rights make full use of the various information media, including the Government Information Service, to air issues, stimulate debate and increase awareness.

52. The establishment of a number of commissions and task forces on various specific subjects has helped raise public awareness of human rights issues. The most recent of these are: Commission for Social Justice; Education Task Force; National Advisory Council on AIDS; Commission on Casino Gambling; National Task Force on the Aetiology of Crime.

53. Two human rights groups are very well known in Barbados, and do much to focus attention on the question of human rights. Amnesty international and Caribbean Human Rights Network have been active and vocal in, amongst other things, stimulating debate about the death penalty, sentencing, and prison conditions. Other non-governmental organizations play key roles in the debate on rights affecting specific groups.

54. Responsibility for human rights rests with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with considerable and consistent inputs from the Ministry of Home Affairs (which has responsibility for the Royal Barbados Police Force), the Attorney General's chambers, the Ministries of Health and Education in compiling reports. Regular dialogue and cooperation with local and regional human rights activists also take place.